

**Testimony of the Connecticut State Medical Society – Sports Medicine Committee -
And Elite Sports Medicine, Connecticut Children's Medical Center
to the Public Health Committee regarding
SB 356 An Act Concerning Athletic Trainers
March 9, 2016**

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and honorable members of the Public Health Committee, on behalf of the physicians and physicians in training of the Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS) and the Connecticut Children's Medical Center, thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony to you today on Senate Bill 356 *An Act Concerning Athletic Trainers*. I am Carl W. Nissen, MD testifying today as the Chairman of the Sports Medicine Committee of CSMS and a physician at Elite Sports Medicine at Connecticut Children's Medical Center.

SB 356 is a potential step forward in helping the delivery of medical assistance to our active citizens. In many situations injured individuals do not have access to the proper care and management to return them to optimal health. Athletic Trainers can play an increased roll in certain situations to assist active people to return to the lifestyle they lead. . SB 356 recognizes the education and knowledge of athletic trainers to assist people of all ages engaged in athletic pursuits who are not currently recognized in statute as participating in organized or school or league related activities by changing the word "athlete" to "physically active person". CSMS, the Sports Medicine Committee and Elite Sports Medicine support this change. However it is important to note that athletic trainers will continue to be required to practice under the supervision of a health care provider, specifically a physician, chiropractor, podiatrist or naturopath.

Physicians have the training and ability to evaluate and diagnose injuries incurred by individuals during recreational activities or during the normal course of a day. Unfortunately, the diagnosis of a problem is only a part of returning individuals back to normal functioning. That often can be assisted by trained professionals such as athletic trainers. The rehabilitation of the injuries often needs explanation and guidance of proper stretching, exercises, and modalities to achieve results. Unfortunately, many of these steps to rehabilitate are not achieved in many situations due to access or time constraints this is not uniform among statutes governing trained professionals. Due to this, some of the neediest individuals do not receive the care they need.

Additionally, these injuries often occur in settings where there are no physicians present or unavailable. These settings, such as youth sports activities, too often set a pattern or sequence of event in motion, which leads, to greater than necessary physical issues and delays in returning individuals back into full functional ability. Athletic trainers are educated in and have the knowledge to render help in these situations and this proposed legislation can assist in achieving beneficial results in these situations.



CSMS, the Sports Medicine Committee and Elite Sports Medicine support changes in language concerning the types of injuries, situations and the procedures that athletic trainers perform, but we object to the inclusion of casting since this treatment modality involves more skill and it constrains and limits the ongoing evaluation of the injury by its semi-permanent nature.

CSMS does not take lightly any proposal to increase the scope of practice for any profession without a full review provided in the provisions of PA 11-207. That said, we support the current clarification regarding the scope of practice for athletic trainers. SB 356 would extend the ability to assure that rehabilitative those injured during athletic activities who for whatever reason do not receive care. This bill is an opportunity to increase access to care for active individuals, especially young athletes.

We would be happy to serve as a resource for you as you debate this proposed legislation.